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Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the assessment of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Assessment of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification" (JIU/REP/2009/4).

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Assessment of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

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Geneva 2009

United Nations

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ABBREVIATIONS

CACILM	Central Asian Countries Initiatives on Land Management
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism (of UNCCD)
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFS	integrated financing strategy
IGO	intergovernmental organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system
JLG	Joint Liaison Group
JWP	joint work programme
MDP	Multi-Donor Platform
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NAP	national action programme
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations
OO	operational objective (of The Strategy)
OP15	operational programme on sustainable land management
RBM	results-based management
SLM	sustainable land management
SRCF	Special Resources for CCD Finance Account
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change
WFP	World Food Programme

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with decision 3/COP.8 (paragraph 27), the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) at its eighth session requested the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to conduct an assessment of the Global Mechanism (GM) and submit it to the ninth session of the COP. The General Assembly in its resolutions 62/193 and 63/218 took note of this request and looked forward to the findings.

2. Accordingly, the JIU conducted a review from January to July 2009 entitled "Assessment of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification".

3. The objectives of this evaluation are:

(a) To identify and recommend a course of action to enhance consistency and complementarities in the delivery of services provided by the UNCCD secretariat and the GM to the Parties;

(b) To provide further guidelines and recommendations to assist both the UNCCD secretariat and the GM in developing and implementing a results-based joint work programme (JWP) equipped with indicators of successful cooperation in the light of the ongoing efforts by the UNCCD secretariat and the GM.

(c) To follow up and update the relevant recommendations of the previous JIU report[1] as approved in decision 3/COP.7 taking into account relevant provisions of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) (The Strategy).

4. In undertaking the review, the Inspectors have found themselves involved in a holistic analysis of the GM in its institutional and working environment. The Inspectors concluded that a reliable diagnostic and assessment could not be carried out in isolation from the institutional setting of the GM, or without a targeted assessment of its effective work against the mandate entrusted to it by the COP, and the successive decisions with direct or indirect impact on its mandate. In doing so, the Inspectors have placed the review of the GM in the perspective of a comparative analysis of mandates of core institutions and bodies, such as the secretariat, the subsidiary bodies of the Convention (e.g. the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)) and relevant partners, such as the members of the Facilitation Committee of the GM. Accordingly, the Inspectors decided to infer from the review a road map, including a diagnostic of the current institutional setting for the effective implementation of The Strategy, conceived as the long-term vision of the Parties for the future development and better positioning of the Convention on the international agenda.

5. It should be stated from the beginning that the current assessment aims to evaluate the GM in its context to determine not only its added value but also whether its activities fall under its mandate or imply, in some cases, duplication with the permanent secretariat or other relevant programmes and organizations. This is an analytical approach similar to the one adopted in preparing the previous JIU report (see footnote 1) assessing the performance of the permanent secretariat as part of a broader governance context. Such a *démarche* is in line with the terms of reference agreed with the COP, inviting the JIU to follow up on the recommendations of the previous JIU report, in particular on those recommendations which were process-related, and to

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[1] JIU/REP/2005/5.

assess the work and performance of the GM taking into account the relevant provisions of The Strategy.

6. In accordance with the JIU internal standards, guidelines and internal working procedures, the methodology followed in preparing this report included a preliminary review, questionnaires, interviews and in-depth analysis. An extensive web-based survey was sent to all the Parties to the Convention, as well as to other relevant stakeholders such as implementing partners and independent experts, among others. All these elements were used to assess the impact of GM activities and the satisfaction of Parties with (a) the achievement of the UNCCD objectives and (b) the specific contribution of the GM to these achievements.

7. The results of this survey complement the qualitative and quantitative information gathered through interviews and desk reviews.

8. Interviews were conducted with the Global Mechanism, the permanent secretariat of UNCCD, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), as well as with different categories of stakeholders, namely representatives of Parties, partner organizations, members of the Facilitation Committee, local representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in GM activities in the field, as well as independent experts on the issue. The Inspectors also sought the views of the secretariats of the two sister conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as those of the financial mechanisms available to date to UNCCD, the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Interviews were conducted either at the headquarters of the organizations, at liaison offices, in the field, or by videoconference. Comments on the draft report have been sought from the Global Mechanism and the permanent secretariat, as well as from other organizations that were interviewed, and taken into account whenever pertinent in finalizing the report.

9. In accordance with article 11.2 of the JIU statute, this report has been finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

10. **The Inspectors wish to highlight the fact that all the recommendations made as part of this assessment remain valid under any of the different scenarios proposed at the end of this report. They are all intended to enhance the overall coherence of the institutional set-up and foster improvements in the performance of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention, independently from the overarching policy strategy to be adopted by the COP, if any, as a result of this assessment.**

11. The Inspectors wish to express their appreciation to all those who assisted them in the preparation of this report, and particularly to those who participated in the interviews and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise.

II. THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: THE GLOBAL MECHANISM IN ITS INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

A. Historical background

12. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was the result of a long-lasting negotiation process between different constituencies with opposing views on the issue of desertification and its global impact.

13. There was no consensual basis for defining the very nature of desertification as an environmental or developmental challenge. Such antagonism could clearly be perceived in the preference shown by some donor countries for persistently addressing it through established bilateral cooperation programmes on rural development and agriculture rather than through multilateral environmental agreements. If understood as part of a broader developmental issue, mainly of a local nature, it was to be addressed on ad hoc basis as part of the cooperation programmes devoted to development, agriculture, food security, and other cross-related issues. From such a perspective, a convention to combat desertification would be redundant and unnecessary.

14. Much progress has been achieved since then although full consensus has not been reached. It is however more widely accepted that prevention and mitigation strategies are desirable as a precautionary approach.

15. Action for reversing degradation and for mitigation is easier to identify, translate into concrete policies and agree upon than those aimed at preventing potential disruption. The Convention also includes, as in its article 10, paragraph 2 (c), a provision for the goal of prevention to play a key role as an early warning institution not only to reverse but also to prevent land degradation.

16. By contrast to the issue of desertification, both biodiversity and climate change topics enjoyed a solid consensus related to their environmental and global nature, a sine qua non requisite for access to GEF that was granted to them and denied to UNCCD, in the first instance.

17. In order to address the controversial issue of funding for the implementation of UNCCD, a specific mechanism was created. The Global Mechanism was born out of a political process and as a last-minute compromise that failed to fully satisfy the different negotiating positions expressed by interested and regional groups. The GM, in spite of not being a fund, was therefore listed under article 21 on financial mechanisms intended to provide financial support to the Convention.

B. Role of the Convention

18. An overarching goal of the Convention is to catalyze the interest of the international community into addressing properly and effectively the problem of desertification. Accordingly, it further aims to contribute to the better positioning of the desertification issue on the international agenda in the context of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, as well as in line with the mandates of other global summits, such as the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, and the long-term objectives emanating from the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

1. Conceptualization: a new point of departure

19. A clear definition of which issues are to be addressed in implementing the Convention, and which are beyond its intended scope, is essential in this regard. The lack of clear boundaries to the concept of desertification itself and what exactly is to be covered by the Convention has subsequently generated a debate among the Parties on this matter that is consuming of time and resources and that compromises more focused and coherent action.

20. Key concepts need to be clarified and agreed among all the Parties, so as to allow for an improved focus on action towards a clearly defined set of goals, duly translated into measurable

targets in conformity with the standards of an effective results-based management (RBM) approach, as already recommended in the previous JIU report and endorsed in The Strategy.

21. **The COP should clearly conceptualize, including through updates if required, the intended scope of UNCCD, and agree on the interpretation of key issues, as per the mandate of the Convention and subsequent relevant decisions on the subject.**

2. Positioning desertification on the socio-economic and political international agenda

22. A consensus on scope and key concepts is a prerequisite to pave the way for the crucial catalytic role of the Convention in effectively positioning the desertification issue on the international socio-economic and political agenda. The Convention should play an essential role in disseminating knowledge and raising awareness on the cross-cutting dimensions of the desertification issue, with direct and indirect impacts at the global level of express relevance to all Parties, beyond traditional divisions between developed and developing countries and the wrong perception of "two constituencies" in the Convention. At the core of this challenge lies the need to highlight the strong linkages between desertification and issues such as climate change, biodiversity, poverty reduction, peace and security, migrations, disaster reduction, food crisis, public health and gender, among others.

23. Addressing desertification needs to be reframed into a win-win strategy for the benefit of all the Parties with a view to reversing its immediate direct impact at the local level, thus preventing the clear multiplier effect of its indirect impact at the global level. Desertification affects all Parties equally, either directly or indirectly and requires a coordinated response, to ensure a global benefit well beyond the sole issue of desertification itself. From a policy perspective, all Parties should be considered affected by the problem, as defined in article 1 of the Convention.

24. The Convention assigns to the COP as its main task "... to promote its effective implementation."[2] This very notion of promoters and not implementers should remain central to the institutions of the Convention and to the Global Mechanism. Equally, the COP has a central catalytic role to play in positioning desertification within the global political, social and economic agenda, and introducing innovative approaches to provide a global framework for implementation, by shifting its current focus from administrative and budgetary issues to a substantive strategic role.

25. **The COP has a central catalytic role to play in strategically positioning desertification within the international political, social and economic agenda, and introducing innovative approaches to provide an enabling global framework for implementation.**

26. From an institutional point of view, the CRIC could play a more proactive role in supporting the COP to focus on better positioning desertification on the international policy agenda. **The Inspectors hope that the CRIC will take into account the contents of the present evaluation in revising its functioning as requested by the COP.**

3. Providing scientific evidence and early warning on desertification issues

27. Another key element, upon which the improved positioning of desertification is highly dependent, relates to a sound scientific basis and evidence-based approaches to support policy

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[2] Article 22, para. 2.

strategies. No targets and no actions can be accurately defined as part of an overall coherent and results-based strategy, unless supported by strong scientific input. The identification of policy priorities should be based on an effective early warning system requiring a well-informed methodology, an effective monitoring system and supporting scientific knowledge to define meaningful indicators. The CST should play a central role in providing up-to-date scientific assessment and contributing to an effective early warning and awareness system. The 2005 JIU report already recommended a revamping of this subsidiary body, and a decision was taken at COP 8 leading to ongoing changes in the functioning of the CST and its networking with external scientific networks, supported by the corporate review process undertaken by the UNCCD Executive Secretary in this regard.

28. **The Inspectors hope that COP 9 will provide additional concrete and practical guidance for the CST to further and efficiently revamp itself.**

4. Identification, mobilization and channelling of resources

29. The identification, mobilization and channelling of resources is a must for providing effective support to Parties to implement the policies and actions identified by the COP.

30. The *raison d'être* of the GM when created was essentially to contribute to identifying new sources to support the goals of the Convention and to play a broking role as a financing mechanism to assist Parties in successfully accessing those resources. Its role was defined as a means "to increase the flow of resources for UNCCD implementation while increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms"[3] while avoiding duplication and adding value to existing mechanisms. It was thus expected to respond to emerging opportunities and to be geared towards promoting multi-source and multi-channel financing.

31. **The COP should:**

(a) Clearly conceptualize desertification and land degradation, to fit the purpose and boundaries of what the Convention is meant to address;

(b) Focus on strategically positioning desertification on the international political, social and economic agenda, and provide an enabling global framework for implementation by, inter alia:

(i) promoting concrete actions and defining evidence-based data to sensitize the international community to the causes and consequences of desertification and its linkages to other core global issues;

(ii) raising its advocacy and awareness profile in this context;

(iii) strengthening its early warning capacity to provide national authorities and the international community with a reliable information base to effectively engage in concrete preventive and remedial actions to combat desertification.

The mechanisms identified for resource mobilization under UNCCD should closely interact with the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, avoiding duplication of their technical and policy advisory role and fostering complementarities. These mechanisms should focus on their specific financial role, by developing their financial expertise and strengthening their key function as providers of information on available sources of funding for the Convention.

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[3] ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1, annex to decision 25/COP.1, p. 76.

C. Mandates emanating from the Convention

1. The unique role of UNCCD

32. The mandates of the UNCCD secretariat and the GM should be complementary and mutually supportive in order to successfully meet the needs of the Parties to the Convention, be these affected or not.

33. Consequently, policy formulation regarding the Convention and its subsequent implementation processes should stop being too often handicapped by antagonistic dynamics, crystallizing around categories of constituencies belonging to "affected" or "non-affected" countries.

34. Parties should see themselves as constituencies on an equal footing facing a global problem for which collective action is urgently required, see cooperation among the different subsidiary bodies as a necessary element to avoid wasting increasingly scarce resources, and the strategic definition of joint work programmes as a necessary element for effective implementation of UNCCD.

2. The dilemma of a dual supporting structure

35. The assessment undertaken by the Inspectors has shown that, in evolving over the years, the respective mandates of the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism, instead of being complementary and synergetic have increasingly been overlapping and duplicating, as the result of different factors: in particular, lack of definition of boundaries and division of labour in their respective mandates,[4] lack of a single vertical chain of command to enforce coordination in the definition and implementation of their respective work programmes, and the absence of regular mechanisms ensuring coherence and integration instead of overlapping and duplication.

36. Concerning coordination, an attempt to define a joint work programme (JWP) is underway, as mandated by The Strategy, but is still far from effectively building upon the unique potential for cooperation and coordination that certainly exists between the secretariat and the GM. The JWP in its current shape is not fulfilling the recommendations of the previous JIU report and its endorsement by the COP in decision 3/COP.8.

37. The need to better delineate the division of labour and ensure an effective differentiation of functions undertaken by the UNCCD secretariat and the GM was already called for in the previous JIU report.[5] In practice, however, both institutions perform similar functions with no ex-ante mutual consultation. They both intervene at the local level, provide technical support work, and aim to raise funds to secure the implementation of their activities, beyond those secured by the core budget. This generates confusion among the Parties in identifying the relevant institutional counterpart to be addressed when submitting their requests for technical assistance.

38. Several examples of failed coordination, as well as competition, were documented during the assessment, that show the urgent need to define regular mechanisms for ensuring coherence and integration. They include a case of non-authorized use of the name of the Executive Secretary in a publication as well as the failure of the GM to notify the secretariat of the cancellation of a meeting, to which staff had travelled on official mission. What in the past

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[4] See annex.
[5] JIU/REP/2005/5, recommendation 14.

appeared to be a problem of – distrust between personalities has clearly emerged as an evident institutional dysfunction, i.e., two entities serving the same constituencies in similar functions without coordination.

39. Overall, the present assessment is not to evaluate merely whether the activities of the GM are successful, but also whether they are undertaken within its mandate and do not expand beyond its assigned area of intervention, duplicating and overlapping assignments that are within the competence of the UNCCD secretariat, the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, or fall under the mandate of other partners such as organizations of the United Nations system and other members of the Facilitation Committee.

40. In adopting medium-term programmes of work, as intermediary steps towards the attainment of the long-term goals established by The Strategy, the COP is paving the way towards the possible adoption, at a later stage, of a protocol of implementation. Indeed, building upon the respective policy and technical advisory roles of the CRIC and the CST, the COP should be able, after a 10-year period, to identify clear actions, instruments, and indicators to accurately define such a protocol. The latter would become an additional instrument for the Convention to systematically address issues under its mandate, also taking into consideration the overall scientific and policy debate in the international community, including synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEA), in particular the Rio conventions.

41. While The Strategy has set up a vision for the implementation of the Convention for 10 years, it has not defined a specific protocol for the implementation of the Convention. Other environmental conventions have set up specific instruments for that purpose by identifying specific protocols of implementation.

42. **The Inspectors believe that such an implementation protocol could be adopted by the COP, as a long-term objective, building upon the lessons that will have been learned in 10 years of experience in implementing The Strategy.**

3. The mandate of the Global Mechanism vis-à-vis The Strategy

43. The goals and *raison d'être* of the Global Mechanism were enshrined in the text of the Convention and the more recent text of The Strategy in 2007. Nevertheless, when defining such goals, both texts remain at a policy level. They do not indicate concrete actions, milestones, targets, and SMART[6] indicators to measure the success and performance of the activities to be undertaken by the GM in order to fulfil a rather broad mandate.

44. The establishment of the Global Mechanism as "a" financing mechanism for the UNCCD was defined in the Convention, in article 21, paragraph 4 while article 21, paragraph 5, defines in more detail its mandate.

45. The Strategy provides a framework that captures the long-term vision of the Parties. As such, this framework, which has embedded in it many of the recommendations of the previous JIU report, is an essential document for the current and future development of the Convention. In addition, it enlarges the scope of work of the GM to include assistance to countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular, The Strategy defines five operational objectives (OO) and their related expected outcomes, and has assigned to the GM a leading role for OO5, and a support role for OO1 and OO2, as per Table 1 below:

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[6] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound.

Table 1
Division of responsibilities between the secretariat and the Global Mechanism based on The Strategy

Division of responsibilities	UNCCD secretariat	Global Mechanism
Operational objective 1: Advocacy, awareness-raising and education *To actively influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought-related issues.*	**Leading role**	Support role
Operational objective 2: Policy framework *To support the creation of enabling environments for promoting solutions to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.*	**Leading role**	Support role
Operational objective 3: Science, technology and knowledge *To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.*	**Leading role**	
Operational objective 4: Capacity-building *To identify and address capacity-building needs to prevent and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.*	Support role	
Operational objective 5: Financing and technology transfer *To mobilize and improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral and multilateral financial and technological resources in order to increase their impact and effectiveness.*	Support role	**Leading role**

46. The Strategy has certainly injected a new impetus to the Convention by providing a vision for the next 10 years, but it has also failed to avoid the existing grey areas in the definition of respective responsibilities while delineating its operational objectives; and in some cases it may even have added to the uncertainty by confusing yet further the assignments of both the GM and the secretariat.

47. The secretariat has a role to play in all operational objectives, and the GM in three of them. An opportunity was lost to introduce SMART indicators and define clear RBM targets in the text of The Strategy, to delineate a road map free of ambiguities in the interpretation of the different implementing responsibilities, which would have in turn created the basis for better defined coordination among the different institutions of the Convention.

48. Further work towards a more specifically RBM approach has been done and was submitted to the seventh session of the CRIC in Istanbul. Even though this commendable effort represented an improvement by using an RBM oriented approach to the programme of work, the indicators proposed are still too vague, defined too often in relative terms (number of, increase of) with no specific quantifiable targets, or even sometimes defined on the basis of the performance of other actors on whom neither the secretariat nor the GM can have a real impact.

49. Finally, reference is to be made to the effort made by the GM in relation to the setting up of an inventory, as per article 21, paragraph 5 (b) of the Convention. The Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD) database provides relevant information that is being used

not only by the GM but by other organizations, as assessed during the interviews held by the Inspectors. Further updating, improvement of its user-friendly profile and networking could make this tool even more useful for addressing land degradation issues and helping to intervene in hotspots which are being identified by systematic monitoring through effective cooperation among the relevant stakeholders in the area of land degradation and sustainable land management (SLM).

50. The 2002 FIELD edition launched a new inventory on drought response activities obtained from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The collaboration between the GM and OCHA should be strengthened in order to contribute to disaster prevention action concerning the potential impact of droughts. The GM could play a role as part of the "flash appeals" launched by OCHA on behalf of the Secretary-General, contributing its expertise and sharing the resources being mobilized through these appeals, when they relate to droughts. A clear strategy concerning the limits of the role of the GM in these interventions should be defined.

4. The mandate of the permanent secretariat

51. In addition to servicing the COP and its subsidiary bodies, the secretariat has the mandate of facilitating assistance to affected developing country Parties, on request, particularly those in Africa, in the compilation and communication of information required under the Convention in article 23, paragraph 2 (c).

52. In order to support affected Parties in the submission of information to comply with the reporting requirements of the Convention, the secretariat needs to secure financial support to assist these countries in gathering and compiling the relevant data, according to the COP reporting standards (data collection, analysis and drafting). Meanwhile, the GM has the mandate of assisting countries in mobilizing resources, and to this end it also needs to rely on updated information collected at the country level. This essentially involves similar work to that associated with the end goal of the secretariat, namely, data collection and assessment of country requirements.

53. Therefore, although the process cycle and the explicit end goals of the GM and the secretariat are different, they have in common a specific type of activity required, in a different stage of their project cycle. Had there been better collaboration between the GM and the secretariat, it could have led naturally to the strengthening of their respective comparative advantages and ultimately to an efficient coordination of resources and sharing of expertise, as well as strengthened specialization in the resource mobilization which falls under the duties of the GM.

54. The secretariat lacks the resources to provide sufficient support to the Convention, both in financial as well as technical and scientific terms. For example, its Knowledge Management, Scientific and Technology unit is understaffed, with only four staff members, of whom only two are funded from the core budget.

55. The lack of coordination in servicing the needs of Parties has led both the secretariat and the GM to develop most of their work programmes on their own, translating into a steady diversification of functions and compromising the increased returns that would naturally derive from a specialization of functions, building on complementarities.

56. Capacity-building activities and awareness-raising are not clearly delimited and the GM is developing capacity-building activities through the massive development of the Designing Integrated Financing Strategies to Combat Desertification (DIFS) initiative. Additionally, there is not even any consultation with the secretariat on the contents of the training packages,

meaning that in practice, there is no coordination or coherence of the message circulated to countries. This contributes negatively to the advocacy role of the Convention by disseminating a perception of "one convention with two heads".

III. ASSESSMENT OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM

57. The specificity of the GM, as a Convention institution listed under article 21 on financing mechanisms, can be interpreted in different ways; for some, it was the fruit of a mere political compromise that led to the establishment of an institution that was not assigned the necessary means and concrete targets to successfully achieve the mandate it was given. For others, the vague definition of means and targets for the GM constituted on the contrary a sort of constructive ambiguity.

58. Against this background of diverging interpretations, the Inspectors believe that an objective assessment of the performance of the GM in achieving its mandate can only be analysed in the full context of the Convention to which it is meant to provide services.

59. **The recommendations made in this and the following chapters specifically aim to promote actions that would lead to a better performance in achieving the goals of the Convention, by improving relationships among its subsidiary bodies, the GM and the Permanent Secretariat. These recommendations are and will remain valid independently from any policy scenario to be adopted by the COP, if any, as the result of this report.**

A. Assessment of the activities of the Global Mechanism

60. The GM has centred the development of its policy strategy around operational objective 5, in particular expected outcome 5.1: "Affected country Parties develop integrated investment frameworks for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources with a view to increasing the effectiveness and impact of interventions."

61. In practice, the GM has reshaped its working modality to achieve its mandate on resource mobilization by becoming a sort of specialized think tank undertaking substantive research on environment-related topics, not only on desertification but on several cross-cutting issues such as climate change, biodiversity, forestry, trade and sustainable development, among others. A mission for which not only does it lack an established mandate but also a function for which it cannot compete with other, better tooled and empowered, institutions.

62. When analysing the working profiles and the staff composition of the GM against the type of activities undertaken, it can be concluded that financial aspects, as such, constitute only one part, and not the most important one, within the areas of expertise it has developed. Indeed, the GM staff structure clearly reflects an organization devoted to substantive thematic research. It can be noted in that regard that the current staff structure of the GM does not reflect the duties of its core mandate. A significant part of the team is backstopping the core resource-mobilization functions by providing technical and expert advice on substantive issues to support the mobilization strategies.

63. By working in a vacuum and with less cooperation than required from other partners, the GM has developed the profile of a self-sufficient organization suitable only to larger institutions entrusted with a much broader mandate for resource mobilization. Its efficiency in servicing parties and consistency with the Convention mandate would have been greatly improved had it strengthened its networks and enhanced information exchange and joint implementation with

other organizations, instead of systematically aiming to incorporate knowledge in-house and minimizing dependency on external input.

64. While project elaboration undoubtedly requires substantive and technical information to be subsumed into project documents to support resource mobilization, there are other means of collecting and coordinating this information, such as networking and partnership. All the members of the Facilitation Committee, and in particular Rome-based agencies including IFAD itself, could be in charge of elaborating the thematic aspect of the projects and in gathering and collecting information at country and regional level, allowing the GM to be more focused on its specific and unique mandate aimed at identifying new sources of funding and promoting innovative approaches to resource mobilization.

65. There is no doubt of the substantive quality of the work undertaken by the GM and its staff, the question at stake however is to ascertain whether that type of substantive work is within its competence, or has expanded beyond the mandate given to it by the Convention.

66. The development of integrated framework strategies (IFS), a core activity of the GM, requires an input in terms of environmental assessments. The approach of the GM should aim to maximize the impact of its own specialized expertise by ensuring liaison and coordination with its partners, in particular members of the Facilitation Committee and other organizations of the United Nations system in the spirit of the "one United Nations" in conformity with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (the Paris Declaration). **It is the view of the Inspectors that the GM has not explored to a sufficient extent the work already undertaken by other partners, in particular, but not limited to, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its country environmental assessments**. The broking capacity for resource mobilization of the GM therefore lacks a cogent basis of scientific environmental assessment that cannot be replaced by the internal expertise developed. Furthermore, in planning and organizing its work in the area of sustainable land management (SLM), the GM has failed to establish effective and operational working relationships with partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP, with a view to building upon their respective comparative advantages.

67. Effective networking with further partners needs also to go beyond ad hoc approaches and take the form of long-term targeted interaction oriented toward the channelling of up-to-date expertise available outside. For instance, the UNFCCC secretariat reported that the organization of meetings at the request of the GM, for information exchange on climate change related topics and linking issues and approaches, could have been useful in facilitating the broking capacity of the GM.

68. The GM should make more active use of assessment capacity available elsewhere, such as in UNEP and the permanent secretariat, in addition to its internal expertise in environment assessment. In the context of the aide memoire agreed with UNDP and UNEP, the role of the secretariat should be clearly underlined given its policy mandate, so as to maximize collaboration with UNEP. UNEP and its division on GEF coordination developed a policy paper in 2002, entitled "Land use management and soil conservation of UNEP: strengthened function approach"[7] that emphasizes the role of UNEP in addressing the environmental dimensions of land use management, in supporting the implementation of UNCCD, and in supporting Africa through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Environment Initiative. The GM should pay attention to the UNEP Governing Council's call for the use of the UNEP Ecosystem Management Programme.

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[7] UNEP/GC.22/INF/25.

69. Concerning the key role in innovative methods of funding, at a time in which the private sector is clearly interested in corporate social responsibility strategies and in improving its public opinion image by supporting relevant causes, this area of fund-raising is still weak in the overall GM strategy. It would certainly be of interest for the Convention to strengthen its relations with the business community, private sector and foundations, in order to identify new sources for mobilizing resources.

70. Too often, it is perceived that the GM targets the same donors as other existing financial mechanisms, and this is neither increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms, nor contributing to gathering updated advice and information on potential innovative sources to complement existing funding.

71. Interviews further seem to point to the fact that the work programme of the GM is apparently more donor-driven than based on requests from eligible parties. Only 20 to 30 per cent of GM current needs are covered by the core budget. It relies essentially on the use of voluntary funds, which are often earmarked according to the specific priorities of donor programmes from which the resources are provided. Only a few donors are eager to contribute non-earmarked funding.

72. The GM work programme is supply-driven and the funding commitment is unpredictable and non-programmable, due to the lack of a GM initiative towards the definition of a clear and coherent framework of operation. No results-based approach has been effectively put into place yet, although a progress report is expected to be presented to COP 9, as part of the joint efforts currently undertaken by the GM and the UNCCD secretariat in the field.

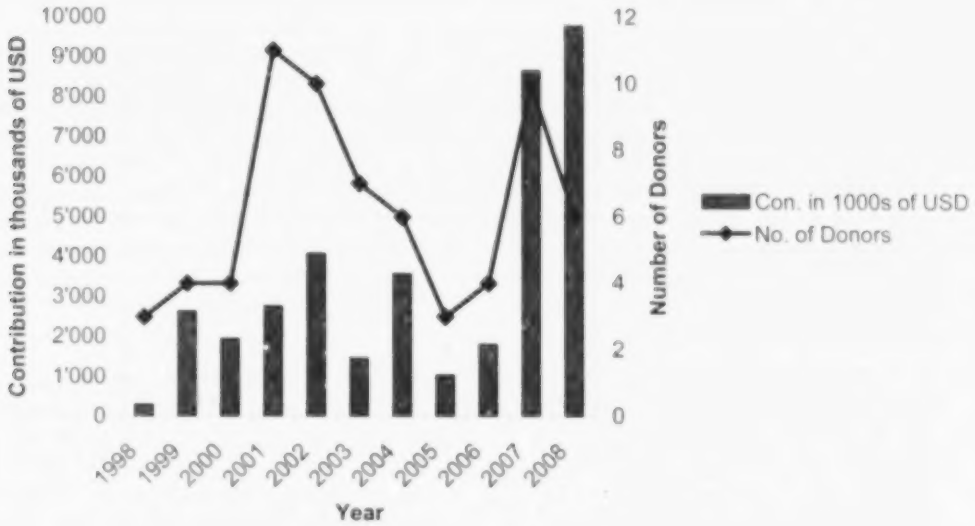
B. Monitoring of resource mobilization by the Global Mechanism

73. During the assessment, the Inspectors analysed the overall resources mobilized by the GM over the years and also assessed the level of satisfaction by stakeholders concerning the use and impact of these funds, based on feedback from donors to and beneficiaries of GM activities, as well as from other partners and stakeholders.

74. As noted earlier in this report, in 2005 the GM undertook a change of management and approach to the type of activities envisaged as part of its strategy. Among the changes introduced, it abandoned the approach of small funding and grants, and in 2007 all the remaining small grants were closed. The current management targets larger projects based on the systematic and worldwide development of IFS in eligible countries.

75. Donor contributions for the period 1998-2008 indicate a significant change of trend in the amount of funds provided, starting from 2005 and coincidental with the change of management and the progressive phasing out of the small-grant projects approach until they were completely eliminated. Overall, the GM received US$38 million during the period 1998-2008 from a variety of donors, of which more than US$20 million between 2005 and 2008. The number of donors has decreased, but the amount of the average contribution per donor has increased, as can be seen in the following graph.

Evolution of donor contributions to the Global Mechanism 1998-2008



76. While the new management of the GM has been successful in targeting and leveraging bigger amounts of contributions from its active donors, it has not succeeded in efficiently exploring and systematically integrating other funding avenues beyond the traditional donor community already targeted by all other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Contacts with foundations, private sector, or other non-traditional donors have not been conceived as a central component of the GM fund-raising strategy, limiting those to ad hoc efforts at national level and only in countries in which the GM has developed activities, such as workshops and seminars on IFS to which it invited representative NGOs, civil society organizations and private foundations to dialogue with government officials and multilateral donors.

77. Recently, the GM formalized the launching of its Multi-Donor Platform (MDP) at its first meeting (held in Prague in May 2009) with the participation of active and potential donors, and open to all current and potential bilateral and multilateral donor agencies supporting the work of the GM with the aim of interacting with donor agencies on upscaling finance for UNCCD implementation at country level and securing increased predictability for the financing of GM operations, through a regular, structured dialogue.

78. It may be observed that the definition of the MDP is again targeting donor agencies, including neither non-traditional donors nor the private sector. The GM seems therefore to persist in a fund-raising strategy that fails to integrate a core attribution of its mandate aimed at introducing new approaches to resource mobilization, which could include corporate sponsorship and approaching foundations and other sources of innovative financing.

79. Financially, the GM relies on three types of funds:

(a) Core Budget Administrative Account (CBAA): the first account designated to the GM is composed of amounts received from allocations from the core budget of the Convention by the COP to meet some of the administrative and operational expenditures of the GM;

(b) Voluntary Contributions Administrative Expenses (VCAE): the second account termed VCAE is a special administrative account only and holds small amounts which finance some GM corporate support costs such as auditing fees and after-service medicals;

(c) Special Resources for CCD Finance (SRCF): the third account is made up of amounts contributed voluntarily by multilateral and bilateral donors. Funds held in this account are used for direct disbursement of operations and co-financing arrangements for country interventions by the GM at national and subregional levels. This is the account identified for all voluntary contributions under the MDP. Up to now, there is neither a trust fund arrangement nor a replenishment process for the overall GM Programme of Work and Budget. All voluntary contributions are discussed and negotiated by the GM with individual donors. This could be changing after the first meeting of the MDP in May 2009, but no specific details were available regarding the format envisaged at the time of finalizing this assessment.

Reporting and accountability

80. The GM reports on its activities to the COP through IFAD, as per the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the COP and the Fund. Financial reporting is included as part of the report that is submitted, on behalf of the President of IFAD, to the COP at its regular sessions. The President of the Fund clears the proposal before its submission to the COP through the Executive Secretary of UNCCD. It is to be noted that the initial arrangements for cooperation between the GM and the UNCCD secretariat, considered an advisory role for the latter through its participation in the Technical Advisory Group as a way to provide advice on the allocation of resources under the SRCF account. Nevertheless, such an advisory structure no longer exists, and no other ex-ante consultative process or structure has been set up to replace consultation with the secretariat on the GM budget proposal, prior to its approval by the President of the Fund.

81. Even though contributions are fully reflected in these reports, **the Inspectors hardly found transparent breakdown information on the end use of these funds, particularly concerning the use of the third SRCF account for voluntary contributions**. The use of programme support costs from voluntary contributions could not be verified, in spite of all the efforts made to obtain detailed and transparent information on this item. The GM claims that the permanent secretariat failed to provide a credible account of the use of the 5 per cent which it retains out of the 13 per cent programme support cost charged on the GM/IFAD portion of the core budget. Notwithstanding this, even the use of the remaining 8 per cent by the GM could not be verified. This situation further illustrates the complexities and limitations inherent in a non-consolidated budget within one single process. In addition, there is no concept of overheads concerning the funds going through the third account in IFAD. They are not reported as such in the financial statements, and there is no particular reference to this budget item in the bilateral MoUs governing these contributions.

82. As for the evaluation of the use of funding and reporting to the donors, the MDP is based on ad hoc approaches to donors and separate reporting. Each relationship with a donor is tailor-made and there is no common template for reporting on activities, or common agreed indicators of performance.

83. In some cases, the representatives of active donors attending the MDP meeting recognized that they had not defined particular indicators or conditions for the evaluation of the impact of their contributions, in achieving specific goals of the Convention. Those that had contributed to the GM were generally satisfied by the work performed and with the reporting received on the activities.

84. Other representatives of non-active donors expressed some concerns on the managerial trends adopted by the GM, as they observed a tendency towards splitting the unity of the COP by encouraging a perception of "different constituencies" in the Convention. They felt that this approach was counterproductive by inducing a conflictual perception of the Convention and the ensuing relationship between different groups. In the past, lack of proactive collaboration between the UNCCD secretariat and the GM had been attributed to specific human factors, however, such an argument can no longer be considered valid in view of the persistence of identified dysfunctions, despite the appointment of a new Executive Secretary.

85. The root causes of the rivalry of the current dual leadership for operations in the field and interactions with the Parties and other institutions can also be found in the absence of timely information sharing between the two entities. The current core budget document does not cover extrabudgetary resources for the GM whereas the GM is not informed of resources available in the UNCCD Supplementary Fund. This situation exemplifies the case of "two budgets for one process".

86. The COP and its Bureau have never exercised actual governance and oversight over the totality of resources used by the GM. The GM received transfers in the amount of US$5.8 million from the core budget of UNCCD for the biennium 2008 to 2009, i.e. an average of US$2.9 million annually.[8] Voluntary contributions amounted to US$9.3 million: US$5.2 million from IFAD and some US$ 4.1 million from other donors. The COP exercised no authority over these extrabudgetary contributions. In the past, the GM suggested a replenishment process to donors, using the new RBM budget process in order to ensure predictability of funding by donors. However, in the context of the MDP, donors did not agree on unearmarked general contributions to secure the portion of resources required to backstop a common service for all donors.

Recommendation 1:

The GM and the UNCCD secretariat should submit a report to the COP containing a total work programme and the total cost estimate involved in the context of their future biennium and medium-term work programme and plan so that the COP can exercise governance and oversight over the mobilization, allocation and use of voluntary contributions and core resources for the entire activities of the UNCCD bodies, the GM and the secretariat.

C. Assessment of the work of the Global Mechanism in the field

87. The Inspectors undertook a number of missions in the field including participating as observers in several regional training activities organized by the GM to disseminate their methodology on IFS.

88. The review of the GM country intervention programme portfolio, based on GM's internal documents, identifies two categories of projects as described in Table 2 below:

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[8] Exact figures will be known after the close of the financial year 2009.

Table 2
Global Mechanism country interventions 1999-2009

Type of project	Africa		Asia		Latin America and the Caribbean		Central and Eastern Europe		Total projects
	No. of projects	%	No. of projects	%	No. of projects	%	No. of projects	%	
Technical assistance on finance	1	54	65	28	4	18	-	-	232
Funding*	36	31	28	24	49	43	2	2	115
Total	**161**	**46**	**93**	**27**	**91**	**26**	**2**	**1**	**347**

Source: Information based on GM internal document: GM Country Interventions
* See detailed breakdown in Table 3

Table 3
Global Mechanism country interventions with direct funding 1999-2009

Region	No. of projects	Funding (in US$)
Africa	36	4,767,313
Asia	28	937,388
Latin America and the Caribbean	49	1,715,440
Central and Eastern Europe	2	220,000
Total	**115**	**7,640,141**

89. For country interventions reported as funding, the total amount contributed during the period 1998-2008 amounts to US$7.6 million, compared to the overall funding raised for the same period of US$38 million (as per the data from the graph in section B above).

90. The terms of reference the JIU developed for its own work (submitted to CRIC 7) provided for establishing quantifiable indicators of successful cooperation between the GM and its partners. This could be measured by investment leveraged by GM intervention for SLM. The GM had claimed that in 2004, it leveraged investments of about US$700 million for the implementation of UNCCD (see IFAD Annual Report 2004, p.73). Upon inquiry, the GM provided the Inspectors with data on financial resources mobilized for SLM through GM interventions (2008-2009). The Inspectors examined the case of the Central Asian Countries Initiatives on Land Management (CACILM) and found that it was indeed supported by a GM strategic partnership agreement for implementation of the UNCCD subregional action programme for the Central Asian Countries. To initiate the elaboration of the Subregional Action Programme for Central Asian countries on combating desertification within the UNCCD context (adopted by five countries in the subregion on 3 September 2003 at Havana),[9] various donors signed a memorandum on a strategic partnership in 2001 in Geneva at the initiative of the GM. The Central Asian countries, as well as the multilateral and bilateral donors such as the Asian Development Bank, the GEF, IFAD, FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), recognized that the GM "spearheaded" the formation of the strategic partnership for UNCCD implementation in the Central Asian countries to develop coordinated, integrated, and holistic donor responses to assist those countries. The GM also provided the countries with a process leading up to the

[9] Available at http://www.unccd.int/actionprogrammes/asia/subregional/2003/srapcd-eng.pdf.

development of the CACILM concept.[10] The agreement was accompanied by the GM initial seed contribution of US$50,000, resulting in total financial resources of some US$1.4 billion over ten years; the plan for phase one received a commitment of US$155 million and a US$9.86 million disbursement as of 31 March 2008.

91. During this assessment, a recurrent issue appeared in aiming to assess in quantitative terms the achievements of the GM in mobilizing resources. While contributions from bilateral donors for GM operational activities can be easily quantified, measuring the impact of these activities on the mobilization of resources has not been easy. The Inspectors note that there is no available methodology to attribute and measure the funds mobilized to the GM's broking efforts activities concerned. The Inspectors believe that such a methodology should be developed as quickly as possible, in line with RBM benchmarks, to define a reliable evaluation framework to assess the achievement of the GM and to increase transparency as to the effective impact of donor contributions. In general terms, spearheading activities by the GM through training, multi-stakeholder workshops, or any other activity responding to operational objectives 1, 2 and 5 as set up in The Strategy may bring about strategic partner agreements such as CACILM.

Recommendation 2:

The Global Mechanism should develop quantitative performance indicators through the compilation of data and information on the financial resources mobilized as a result of its country and regional interventions, with demonstrated recognition of its spearheading role and contributions made to the production of agreed national and regional/subregional initiatives on SLM programmes and projects.

92. While appreciating the opportunity to participate in IFS training, some countries were sceptical about the real value added of such an initiative, often perceived as a new packaging and rebranding by the GM of already existing methodologies.

93. The IFS is at the centre of the current development strategy of the GM and its further extensive development has been at the core of the proposal presented to the MDP, as a key instrument for implementing the support of the GM at national level. This strategy has been developed internally by the GM without significant involvement of potential partners in implementation, in particular the GEF, or the members of the Facilitation Committee and the Rome-based agencies of the United Nations, which somewhat begs the question as to its soundness, representativeness and system-wide acceptance and support.

IV. THE GLOBAL MECHANISM WITHIN THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

94. Defining broad mandates and assigning wide-ranging duties to the secretariat and the GM without the provision of the necessary means or designation of clear areas of focus, has invariably led to mandate expansion beyond assigned functions and evolved towards functional overlapping and duplication.

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[10] Asian Development Bank (ADB) document, "Project Development Facility Block B (PDF-B) Proposal to the Global Environment Facility for the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management", December 2004, pp.3, 17 and 18.

95. Had the collaboration and coordination between the GM and the secretariat been more proactive, effective and efficient, the use of the limited resources available could have been maximized for the benefit of the Parties. Simple collaborative schemes would have sufficed to ensure such a key requirement, along the lines of specialization, segregation of duties and increased focus. A simple but efficient scenario could have been achieved in this regard had the GM focused on securing funding and its broking role, thus allowing the permanent secretariat to focus on its policy mandate.

96. In practice, this situation has led to the misleading perception by eligible Parties that assistance could be provided by either the GM or the secretariat, depending only upon which is being approached, with no clear distinction of roles or purpose of intervention. Such misunderstanding has strongly contributed to the gradually prevailing perception of a "bicephalic" convention under which the support provided remains ad hoc, erratic and unpredictable, lacking an overarching programmatic agenda for implementation. Furthermore, the activities of the GM do not seem to be adequately shared in terms of information and coordination with the secretariat, nor even with implementing partners such as UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank or other regional banks, or members of the Facilitation Committee and other relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system.

97. The objective of the GM as defined by its original mandate is to ensure added value to existing set-ups and avoid duplication while creating innovative approaches to financial resources and technology transfer. The practice, as assessed by the Inspectors during their review, shows on the contrary that the GM has evolved towards a different interpretation and subsequent implementation of its duties, acquiring a level of self-guidance and initiative, without sufficient oversight, in the definition of its programme of work and selection of targeted affected parties that goes well beyond its expected duties.

98. The fact that in almost 15 years, smooth cooperation between the GM and the secretariat has not been enshrined and consolidated in practice indicates that it should be induced exogenously. This could be achieved by defining new institutional settings with clear boundaries between the two bodies, reinforced by a results-based programme of work, including SMART indicators of performance, against which to effectively monitor the implementation of the Convention.

99. In view of this increased divergence in trends and coordination of activities between the GM and the UNCCD secretariat, and in order to restore a working environment which fosters synergies and ensures the effective achievement of the goals of the Convention and the best use of resources, the Inspectors believe that targeted institutional change would benefit the Parties while providing a new framework for collaboration.

100. In order to conceptualize the possible scenarios for such an institutional restructuring, as part of the holistic analysis of the GM within its institutional context, this review briefly examines the subsidiary bodies of the Convention to assess their current roles and possibly to strengthen them as part of the proposed scenario of institutional restructuring.

A. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST)

101. As indicated in the situational analysis prepared by the Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) as a follow-up to the JIU recommendations,[11] the effective role of the CST compared to expectations as to its potential achievement has been weak, producing very few sound scientific outcomes. The procedures for nominating CST representatives, often

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[11] See ICCD/COP(8)/INF.5, paras. 14-15.

attending other meetings such as the COP or CRIC as well, have oriented the Committee towards a membership characterized by political rather than technical profiles. This has clearly limited the content and scope of the substantive debate and has not allowed this subsidiary body to deliver state-of-the-art scientific output.

102. An important inflexion point resulted from the adoption of The Strategy at COP 8, in which important decisions were taken in order to pave the way for a reshaping of the role of the CST at COP 9, in particular decision 13/COP.8, encouraging the creation of scientific consortia to work jointly with the CST.

103. Decision 13/COP.8 and ongoing development towards a reshaped CST are moves in the direction suggested by the previous JIU report. Nevertheless, efforts in that respect need to be further focussed, in particular regarding improved meeting planning so as to ensure the timely channelling of scientific outcomes into the COP sessions. The present concomitant nature of meetings does not provide an enabling environment for effectively feeding CST input into the COP policy formulation process.

B. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

104. In 2001, as the result of decision 1/COP.5, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) was established. Its terms of reference aimed to ensure that the Committee effectively contribute to the improvement of the implementation of the Convention by analysing information, identifying bottlenecks, obstacles, good practices and success stories.

105. In practice, the potential of such a mandate has not been exploited to the maximum benefit of the Convention, as the CRIC has been more an intermediary in transmitting reports than a body adding concrete value to the reporting process. The web-based survey revealed that no more than 13 per cent of respondents believe that the CST and the CRIC respond to the expectations corresponding to their mandates. **The Inspectors believe that the role of the CRIC should be reshaped and strengthened so as to play a more policy-strategic role in the overall governance structure of the Convention.**

Recommendation 3:

The COP should ensure that effective terms of reference are put in place to strengthen and reshape the roles of the CST and the CRIC, as providers of scientific and policy assessment to the COP in light of their respective mandates.

C. The Global Mechanism and the permanent secretariat

106. Article 1 of the 1999 Arrangement for Co-operation between the secretariat and the GM calls for measures to avoid duplication of efforts and to promote effectiveness in the implementation of the Convention.

107. Article 6 on public awareness activities also recalls that the Convention secretariat has prime responsibility for public information on the Convention, and that the secretariat and the GM will limit their information activities to their own specific functions as specified in the Convention and/or in subsequent decisions of the COP.

108. The mandate given to both institutions for the same type of activities, with no clear delimitation, has paved the way for many, often divergent interpretations. By reading these

articles, it clearly appears that boundaries could have been properly defined had the mandates and further decisions taken by the COP been more specific and precise in defining the respective areas of competence.

109. Transparency is a prerequisite to improve cooperation and mutual exchange of information and should be automatic. When engaging in MoUs with other partners, such as the case of the aide memoire with UNDP and UNEP signed by the GM, the secretariat should be informed prior to the signature and be aware of the terms of the agreements being negotiated, particularly if they are considered to fall outside the established GM mandate. The Inspectors found that the permanent secretariat did not even dispose of copies of these agreements.

110. During the assessment, the Inspectors requested a legal opinion from the Office of Legal Affairs, through the permanent secretariat, to clarify the legal basis and the extent to which the GM is authorized to sign agreements on its own, without the participation of the permanent secretariat of the Convention. The hosting agreement with IFAD refers to the separate identity of the GM, but this is defined in the context of the IFAD-GM relationship. It has been further assessed that some of the MoUs contracted by the GM were not signed by the Managing Director himself but by the Director of Strategic Programmes as officer in charge.

111. The Inspectors found no evidence of the GM being legally independent from the secretariat, while the secretariat is the legal body designated to represent the Convention, in particular for all agreements with other partner organizations that relate to the United Nations system. The Inspectors sought a legal opinion from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs for further clarification on this question and others related to the potential impact on the Convention in case of change of the current institutional settings. Unfortunately, feedback did not reach the JIU in time to be included in the present report.

D. The Global Mechanism and the International Fund for Agricultural Development

112. IFAD was selected as the host institution for the GM in decision 24/COP.1. The MoU between the COP and IFAD[12] defines the reporting and accountability lines as part of the hosting arrangement. The procedure whereby reports to the COP are submitted by the GM on behalf of the President of IFAD, have converted the reporting line into an indirect relationship between GM and the COP, since the GM is accountable to IFAD in the first instance.

113. In the view of the President of IFAD, the relationship between IFAD and the GM is based on a balanced win-win exchange between the two institutions. He added that the GM benefits from administrative services and logistics support provided by IFAD, including the ability of IFAD to make funds available to the operations of the GM based on confirmed donor commitments for contributions, in order to prevent the negative impact of delayed and/or late disbursements. The President of IFAD recognized the synergies between the missions of IFAD and the GM and emphasized that the hosting of the GM should add value to IFAD operations. The current arrangements do not involve any accountability, oversight and/or coordination functions to be enforced by IFAD over the GM, as this is the prerogative of the COP.

114. In addition to the primary role of IFAD as the host institution, further complexity was introduced to compensate the two other bidding organizations, the World Bank and UNDP, by assigning them roles as part of the Facilitation Committee, and membership of the panel to select the Managing Director of the GM.

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[12] ICCD/COP(3)/20/Add.1, decision 10/COP.3.

115. Parties consulted during this review all agreed that the COP was dedicating most of its limited time to controversial negotiations around budget proposals and their subsequent allocation to the secretariat and the GM. It was further underlined that it would be to the benefit of all to find a constructive solution to this chronic institutional dissonance that jeopardizes the effectiveness of COP meetings by diverting time and effort to counterproductive discussion on budget sharing. This has indeed led to a remarkable loss of interest by country representatives in attending COP meetings, and further translated into a decrease of participation and attendance levels. Changes in the accountability and reporting lines are a prerequisite for facilitating the integration of administrative and budgetary reporting processes to the COP.

116. Further synergies can be developed between IFAD and the GM, aimed at achieving a much more important contribution by the latter to the process of resource mobilization. According to a portfolio review of IFAD, 60 to 70 per cent of its projects are related to drought and/or land management. There is also room for further cooperation in the area of financing for agricultural development for the GM. This approach could be developed with other partners by undertaking systematic portfolio reviews and identifying SLM related projects and hotspots for which the GM could provide support in identifying and mobilizing resources.

117. Apart from administrative and finance support, IFAD is also providing staff health insurance schemes and privilege and immunities arrangements to GM staff members. IFAD allows one year salary advance for positions financed by the core budget which enables the GM to cope with the late payment of assessed contributions by some Parties. Office space is provided free of charge.

118. Concerning the collaboration between IFAD and the GM, it is worth noting that the GM requested Unisféra[13] to undertake an external evaluation of the strategic opportunities of the Global Mechanism. Such an evaluation was however requested after the JIU evaluation had been mandated by the COP, and from that point of view could have pre-empted its assessment and findings. According to the Managing Director of the GM, the Unisféra evaluation was interrupted at the request of the GM so that new developments, in particular concerning the replenishment process and report, would be further discussed before the evaluation was finished.

119. In the responses to the web-based survey undertaken by the JIU in the context of this assessment, there is a remarkably high level of consensus on the question concerning the potential for improvement in administrative matters related to the current institutional arrangements of the GM. More than 75 per cent of the respondents agreed that it would be very important to improve the arrangements concerning administration and hosting, and more than 80 per cent considered that reporting and accountability lines should be improved, through changes in the current modalities of the administration of the GM.

Recommendation 4:

The COP should revisit the current arrangements governing the reporting and accountability lines of the GM to the Convention to eliminate the side effects that have hampered the development of effective collaboration, and that have led to an increasing alienation process of this financing mechanism in respect of the COP and its governance and oversight structure.

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[13] Non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of sustainable development, based in Canada.

E. The Global Mechanism and partnerships with other international organizations

120. The GM was provided with an advisory board of organizations considered key partners for the implementation of its mandate. The members of the Facilitation Committee[14] were therefore supposed to play a key role, as strategic partners, in the development of GM activities.

121. As part the feedback gathered through interviews and the web-based survey, the general impression of most of the partners is that the GM does not make enough use of their own or other partners' networking potential. They are approached on ad hoc basis when needed, as part of the individual strategy of the GM, but very few of them have the impression of enjoying the status of permanent partners to be involved in coordinated strategies. In some cases the level of partnerships is framed in such an ad hoc manner that official representatives of the organizations interviewed were not aware of ongoing collaboration with the GM.

122. The Inspectors have also observed that there has been insufficient exploitation of the potential for collaboration with agricultural and food organizations, such as FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP), which are part of the hub-based United Nations system organizations in Rome, agencies and programmes with which the GM could have certainly developed further partnership and joint strategies on such interrelated issues as sustainable land management, including the root causes of land-related calamities and food shortage. This is in line with the spirit of "delivering as one United Nations".

123. A similar opinion was expressed by the respondents to the survey, of which more than 70 per cent considered that the GM should strengthen its partnerships in delivering its work, in the spirit of the Paris Declaration.

124. Furthermore, working in close relationship with other organizations was explicitly referred to as part of decision 25/COP.1 on collaborative institutional arrangements in support of the GM, with explicit reference to collaboration with FAO, GEF, UNEP, WFP, UNDP, the World Bank and regional organizations.

125. During the assessment, the Inspectors interviewed representatives of the different organizations that were mentioned in the collaborative arrangement and that are also part of the Facilitation Committee and noted that collaboration, exchange of information, and development of joint activities is not happening to the extent that could be expected from the institutional arrangements in place, even in those cases in which specific MoUs have been signed.

126. For instance, the aide memoire signed by the GM, UNDP and UNEP "to harmonize respective programming of the three institutions to achieve synergies, identify joint and complementary activities, reduce potential overlap and maximize resource use efficiencies in sub-regions and countries of common interest" could have provided a meaningful framework for effective cooperation in the field with these organizations, in accordance with the Common Country Assessment-United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA-UNDAF) processes, had there been previous consultation with the secretariat and had the latter been affiliated to such a tripartite initiative.

127. In the case of UNEP, the absence of contacts between the GM and environmental assessment staff leads to the legitimate question as to how the GM prioritizes its role as a broker in a sufficiently convincing way among the stakeholders and the donors. This impairs the

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[14] The members of the Facilitation Committee include: ADB, the African Development Bank, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, the World Bank, UNDP, FAO, WFP, GEF, the UNCCD secretariat, and IFAD.

performance of the GM in an area such as carbon offset where it should benefit from a sophisticated scientific, technical, legal and financial framework for CO2 emission reduction with carbon sequestration. One might wonder how such a tiny entity as the GM could develop its operational framework without benefiting from the expertise of UNEP through its collaboration with the secretariat of UNCCD.

128. The GM has failed to support the mainstreaming of financial resources to tackle desertification in the context of regional SLM cooperation and tended to duplicate or miss linkages with existing major initiatives in the Asia and Pacific region. The GM should take advantage of the presence of other international organizations, in particular the convening power of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as well as for facilities in organizing its workshops and seminars and brokering investment programmes and projects.

F. Lessons learned from the governance structure and partnerships

129. The original mandate given by the Convention, broad enough to lead to divergent interpretations, together with subsequent decisions which have further increased the grey areas in terms of the respective duties of the organizations, do not provide a clear reference framework for a net division of tasks. Furthermore, the potential embodied in the original agreements is under-used, as is shown in the case of the MoU between the GM and the secretariat.

130. The Inspectors insist that clarification should be sought and net definition of duties and areas of competence be revisited in order to reduce overlapping, better grasp collaboration opportunities and ensure increased effectiveness of work through a collective approach based on differentiated specialization and unequivocal guidance from the COP. More than 90 per cent of the web survey respondents agreed that it was necessary to improve the current working modalities of the GM in order to improve the definition of its work programme and the implementation of its activities.

Recommendation 5:

The COP should effectively guide the GM in defining a programme of work that avoids duplication and overlapping with the mandates of other organizations, or with other subsidiary bodies or institutions of the Convention, so as to promote enhanced cooperation, coordination and effectiveness by involving other sister organizations, in particular the members of the Facilitation Committee.

V. THE RIO CONVENTIONS: SYNERGIES AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

A. Synergies between the Rio conventions

131. The three Rio conventions were not only born together but they clearly address interrelated issues as revealed by the evolution of scientific knowledge since 1992. In almost 20 years, issues that were only accepted on a provisional basis when considered at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, have since been validated, reinforcing the belief that coordinated action to jointly tackle problems is a win-win approach, both in terms of efficiency in the use of resources and effectiveness of the impact of the actions taken.

132. In 2002, the secretariats of the three Rio conventions established a Joint Liaison Group (JLG), with the purpose of promoting cooperation and developing complementarities and

synergies. Later on, the group was expanded to include the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The JLG is an example of the developments called for in UNEP decision 17/25 (1993) "to promote the coherent coordination of the functioning of environmental conventions, including their secretariats, with a view to improving the effectiveness of the implementation of the conventions".

133. While the group is still active, its last meeting being held in the context of the recent seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York, in May 2009 (9th meeting), there is still room for strengthening much further the current level of cooperation, in particular in the area of adaptation and mitigation to climate change, and linkages with biodiversity and desertification. The web-based survey also revealed a high consensus rate among respondents in supporting the need to further strengthen collaboration on the basis of existing synergies (more than 70 per cent). The Executive Secretary of UNCCD drew attention to the need for work, at least on a pilot basis, on joint implementation of national action programmes (NAPs) and national adaption programmes of action (NAPAs) in some countries, which would demonstrate joint action by the Rio conventions and respond to calls from Parties for greater synergies, particularly at national level.

B. Resource mobilization mechanisms of the Rio conventions

134. The GEF is the designated institutional structure operating as the centralized financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The relationship between CBD and the GEF is governed by a memorandum of understanding between the CBD Conference of the Parties and the Council of the GEF adopted at the CBD COP 3 (decision III/8).

135. The GEF aims to facilitate financial resources to implement projects of a global nature and environmental benefit. As such, it was not affiliated to UNCCD at its inception, owing to divergent views on the global nature of desertification. Such divergent views are still to be heard in the ongoing debate related to the environmental versus developmental nature of desertification.

136. The second GEF Assembly, held in Beijing in October 2002, designated land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, as a focal area of the GEF as a means to support the implementation of UNCCD through its Operational Program on Sustainable Land Management (OP15). Despite the critical time lost for the UNCCD implementation process through this late integration into the GEF, many countries are of the view that OP15 only marginally addressed desertification.

137. Furthermore, the opening of this new financial window for "land issues" introduced further confusion in the eligibility criteria under OP15 by amalgamating the topics of desertification and deforestation. Had the definition of the issue covered by the Convention been clearly delimited, such an expansion in the interpretation of the potential issues to be addressed would not have occurred.

138. Indeed, the data in Table 4 below confirm that UNCCD remains the "poor sister" of the three Rio conventions. The funding made available through the GEF for biodiversity and climate change is more than double that made available for land degradation for the same period.

Table 4
GEF support to the three conventions 2005-2008 (in US$)

Focal area	Project amount	Project fees	PPG[a] amounts	PPG fees
Biodiversity	799,592,705	76,333,213	22,115,031	5,000
Climate change	799,145,346	77,381,703	22,761,673	73,887
Land degradation	355,915,844	35,361,528	13,601,041	69,000

Source: GEF secretariat, May 2009
[a] Project preparation grant.

139. From these data, it clearly appears that despite being a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, the GEF does not provide as much support to address land degradation projects as it does for biodiversity and climate change.

140. OP15 is open to land degradation, and can therefore also include deforestation and humid areas, beyond desertification and drylands. It appears that this broad delineation of the window of funding for which UNCCD is eligible, has contributed to igniting the conceptual debate on the scope and coverage of the Convention.

Other financial mechanisms for the Rio conventions

141. UNFCCC has created new financial mechanisms to support the needs of the Convention, mainly through market-based mechanisms. In particular, the Clean Development Mechanism has generated a significant increase of resources available to achieve UNFCCC goals. Other funds have also been established, in particular the Adaptation Fund, through which the channelling of significant resources is expected.

142. On the other hand, the CBD has not created specific instruments to channel extrabudgetary funds. Nevertheless, it reports more than US$13 million in voluntary contributions for the year 2008, mainly from bilateral donors.

143. Both the GM and the UNCCD secretariat have separately approached UNFCCC so as to explore the potential for linking issues based on the clear role that land management plays in adaptation. However, the terms of this collaboration are not yet precisely defined and uncoordinated approaches by the GM and the secretariat do not help in facilitating the process.

144. Further collaboration with the United Nations Forum on Forests is also to be developed as it is creating financing instruments that are closely related to issues of land management.

145. Clearly, synergies among the different environmental conventions represent potential for an effective strategic design in identifying and promoting new sources of funding or resources for implementation of UNCCD.

146. The last JLG meeting considered ways to enhance joint targets and indicators in order to promote harmonized reporting on joint implementation. The definition of commonly agreed instruments to address areas of clear synergies would facilitate the implementation of integrated strategies to achieve goals under the three different conventions, while improving effectiveness and efficiency in resource management. However, such enhanced coordination would need to be approved by the three governing bodies of the convention whose constituencies do not necessarily coincide.

C. The role of the Global Mechanism in promoting synergies between the Rio conventions

147. In order to enhance joint programmes between the Rio conventions on land degradation, climate change and biodiversity, the comparative advantage of the GM could be used. Indeed,

UNCCD provides in its article 8 on the relationship with other conventions, that "The Parties shall encourage the conduct of joint programmes, particularly in the fields of research, training, systematic observation and information collection and exchange, to the extent that such activities may contribute to achieving the objectives of the agreements concerned."

VI. INSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS TO FOSTER THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GLOBAL MECHANISM

A. Elements for effective implementation of the Convention

148. As a result of this assessment, the Inspectors believe that in order to align role of the GM with the needs of the Convention, as per the COP mandate, actions leading to increased transparency, clearer reporting and accountability lines, as well as enhanced coordination and cooperation with other institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention, have to be taken to foster its successful implementation.

149. Different stakeholders positively assessed the activities undertaken by the GM. However, criticisms have also been expressed concerning the low level of consultation in seeking guidance from the COP. The GM appears to be defining its strategy and programme of work on its own, developing ad hoc and tailor-made relationships with a subset of Parties, thus promoting a perception of different constituencies within a convention divided into two antagonistic groups. This approach is detrimental to the Convention and does not contribute to strategic and homogeneous advocacy for UNCCD on the international agenda.

150. While respecting the procedures for reporting, as defined by the MoU between the COP and IFAD, and taking advantage of the broad definition of the mandate provided by the COP, the interaction of the GM with the governing bodies of the Convention is based more on ex-post reporting than ex-ante coordination and consultation. In the long term, the Protocol of Implementation proposed for the consideration of the COP, could provide clear procedures and define an explicit framework for implementation, with unambiguously defined tasks for the different institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention.

151. The separate identity of the GM, and the channelling of its reporting line through IFAD, has progressively contributed to fade away its direct relationship with the COP, leading to an institutional alienation of the GM from the Convention process. Stretching to a maximum extent the interpretation of the vague mandates provided by the COP, the GM has acquired a level of independence and decision-making that has evolved beyond what a mere administrative hosting arrangement was meant to provide when approved by the Parties. This separate administrative identity has progressively broadened a gap in substantive communication and coordination with the other bodies and institutions of the Convention, in particular with the secretariat.

152. Bridges should be built and supported by enhanced institutional governance, based on a structure which would not depend upon goodwill for cooperation but is defined in unequivocal terms as to the segregation of functions and coordination procedures. Such a system should be further coupled with effective monitoring and enforcement measures. The survey undertaken revealed that more than 50 per cent of respondents qualified as "low" or "very low" the level of communication and working modalities between the GM and the secretariat in the current set-up.

153. As already recommended in the previous JIU report, and later endorsed by The Strategy, the systematic adoption of RBM work programmes constitutes a necessary tool for the clarification of responsibilities and outcomes among the different institutions and bodies of the

Convention, to be combined with further clarification in the grey areas in which the overlapping of functions occurs.

154. The development of joint work programmes (JWPs) to ensure coordination and cooperation between the permanent secretariat and the GM has been requested by the COP (decision 3/COP.8), as a means to ensure the effective implementation of The Strategy. The Inspectors note that while the biennium 2008-2009 is close to its end, the JWP for that period is yet to be finalized, too late to be an effective planning and coordinating instrument. Efforts are being made in defining the JWP for 2010-2011, but for the time being the advanced draft costed versions are being drafted separately by the two bodies, instead of defining an ex-ante joint work programme from which to infer, at a later stage, their respective individual work programmes. The time spent on the elaboration of the 2008-2009 JWP and the forthcoming one still under consideration, added to the numerous divergent views expressed throughout the process of consultation within the specially established task force and up to management level, reveals a structural dysfunction. It remains to be seen whether both institutions will provide the COP with an integrated instrument to assist it in exercising governance and managerial direction over the entire advisory and capacity-building assistance provided by the UNCCD bodies in a holistic way. Significant improvements are to be achieved for the next biennium JWP if there is a willingness for it to become an effective tool to include the complementarity element and coordination as basic conditions for the effective and coherent implementation of The Strategy.

155. Moreover, the permanent secretariat and the GM have no common fund-raising strategy. The GM considers that the responsibility to ensure adequate funding of the core budget as well as the UNCCD Participation and Supplementary Funds rests with the Executive Secretary of the Convention. In its recent audit report (March 2009), the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommended that the secretariat should create a documented fund-raising strategy to ensure funding for these funds.

156. It was also emphasized the urgent need for the secretariat to establish, in consultation with the GM, a common strategy with respect to the mobilization of resources for assistance activities that are complementary to GM activities. **The Inspectors are of the view that there should be a common fund-raising strategy addressing both the needs of affected parties and the internal requirements of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention.** The survey also revealed that more than 85 per cent of respondents consider that changes in the administrative and current working modalities would have to address financial and budgetary matters as a high priority.

157. The fact that the GM follows IFAD administrative rules and procedures in terms of administration and use of resources, as well as on matters pertaining to liability and legal identity, does not help in consolidating joint reporting or building a joint work programme.

158. The President of IFAD indicated that both scenarios 1 and 2, as described in chapter VI, section B below, have been noted by IFAD. However, he stressed that if the COP decides to adopt the "status quo" scenario, it should develop a concrete mechanism for enforcing accountability and oversight of the GM and coordination with other entities, in particular with the permanent secretariat. The GM being an independent institution in its own right, IFAD is not contemplating taking up any such additional functions. In the view of the President, the hosting of the GM at IFAD headquarters is not necessarily linked to the implementation of any of the scenarios, either the "status quo" or the "merging with the secretariat", given the fact that merging can be implemented, with or without a physical relocation of the GM. Thus, IFAD is open to discussion of the current hosting arrangements, assuming that even in the case of an institutional merging the relocation of the GM is not necessary.

B. Alternative scenarios for enhancing coordination and effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention

1. Rationale for institutional arrangements

159. In order to assist the COP, the Inspectors considered the structural bottlenecks of the current governance structure of the Convention as regards the GM and its added value, and presented possible avenues for its better functioning, taking into account synergies with other UNCCD bodies. In this respect, the Inspectors conceived three scenarios for institutional arrangements to be submitted for the consideration of the COP. In these different scenarios, pros and cons are presented in the light of the mandate provided by the Convention and, more recently, by The Strategy.

160. The vision defined in The Strategy still needs to be accompanied by detailed guidelines on implementation and articulation between the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention. There should also be a means of effectively monitoring and measuring progress and performance in its implementation.

161. Some Parties suggested that, after the establishment of the GEF as a financial mechanism for UNCCD, the abolition of the Global Mechanism would be of no harm to the Convention. The same Parties further argued that, on the contrary, such a scenario would contribute to resolving the current inefficiencies and assist in building a consolidated image of the Convention.

162. Such a radical scenario, while obviously resolving all issues at stake in terms of overlapping and lack of coordination, would not pay tribute to the long-standing trajectory of expertise building and knowledge development achieved by the GM, and even less to its renewed efforts in mobilizing funds in the last years.

163. Therefore, while the COP might wish to consider debating this scenario, which represents the views of a significant number of Parties and other relevant stakeholders, the Inspectors are of the opinion that such an option would fail to take advantage of this unique instrument and to capitalize on the experience accumulated over the years.

2. Scenario 1: improvement in the status quo

164. It should be recalled that the COP decided that GM institutional arrangements with IFAD should remain unchanged. On the other hand, the COP expressed interest in monitoring the effectiveness and added value of the institutional arrangements of the GM with IFAD in line with JIU recommendations.[15] From that perspective, the "status quo" option, as set out below, would be in compliance with the COP decision. The advantage resides in its obvious simplicity, which implies no structural changes. The Inspectors have proposed a number of improvements in the management and governance of the GM within the existing institutional setting. The disadvantage, however, relates to the fact that such an option would not fully address the dilemma of a bicephalic structure split between the GM and the permanent secretariat. This dilemma appears most strongly in terms of the risk of duplication of advisory services rendered to the Parties, assistance at the regional and national levels (support in NAPs formulation) and multi-country cooperative frameworks involving the regional coordination centres of UNCCD/the regional commissions. Moreover, the divergent ways both institutions interact with many funding mechanisms available in the field of drought and land degradation, as well as

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[15] ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, decision 3/COP.8, annex para.18 (a) (i) and (ii).

biodiversity and climate change adaptation, would have to be overcome. The success of this option requires closer mutual contacts and communication and depends on a better allocation of work, taking into account respective resources, capacity and comparative advantages.

165. Maintaining the status quo should not be done without addressing the serious problems identified during this assessment. Within the current institutional setting, strict measures should be taken to ensure lasting solutions to:

(a) Duplication and overlapping in mandates and activities within the Convention;

(b) Promotion of complementarities, synergies and RBM joint work programmes;

(c) Enhanced coordination and cooperation;

(d) Definition of clear division of labour;

(e) Duplication and overlapping of mandates with other IGOs, in particular with implementing agencies and other financial mechanisms;

(f) Promotion of synergies with other MEAs and strengthening partnerships with IGOs and CSOs;

(g) Clarification of the reporting lines to the COP (with particular emphasis on the need to eliminate indirect reporting);

(h) Clarification of the accountability chain;

(i) Securing long-term financial predictability.

166. It is worth noting that in spite of these problems being known to the COP for a very long time, the piecemeal response, adopted without a systematic and integrated framework, has proved to be unsatisfactory and with little impact. Probably, the most feasible way would be to increase the understanding of the role and methodologies of the GM by clearly defining its results-based work programme and the scope of available services. On the other hand, the COP Bureau and the COP itself have never exercised governance over the totality of resources used by the GM and they are yet to exercise authority over all the extrabudgetary contributions under UNCCD. The COP should adopt on the basis of the joint proposals by the GM and the permanent secretariat:

(a) A strategic overall plan of GM interventions taking into account the normative advisory service provided by the permanent secretariat;

(b) A programme budget and administrative budget encompassing both core and extrabudgetary resources, including intervention at the field level.

167. Moreover, the COP should also establish a special segment to focus on the consideration of the above, with a view to better govern policies and manage predictable resources for GM operations.

3. Scenario 2: institutional merging of the permanent secretariat and the Global Mechanism

168. The merging of the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD secretariat is a scenario that has gathered significant support among Parties and relevant partners, as assessed during the research by the Inspectors, as a way to rationalize the interaction and cooperation between subsidiary bodies, while facilitating enhanced cooperation, coordination and definition of a unique work programme; simplifying and clarifying reporting and accountability lines; and fostering efficiency and effectiveness by rationalizing the use of resources and avoiding duplication.

169. This merger is proposed as part of an overall institutional design where the functions currently assigned to the GM and the UNCCD secretariat would be preserved and mutual

support between the different divisions of such a single secretariat would be clearly defined and delimited to avoid ambiguities. The division of work should be assigned to three different areas dealing respectively with administration and logistics, research and advocacy, and resource mobilization. These divisions would be substantive and technically support the CST and the CRIC, whose respective roles should be strengthened along the lines of enhanced scientific assessment and improved policy advice.

Division of Research, Science, Technological Innovation and Advocacy

170. A Division of Research, Science, Technological Innovation and Advocacy would address key science and technology issues to develop early warning systems and to identify priorities at the core of the Convention mandate. It would also contribute to the continuous update of the fast-evolving knowledge basis to support the work of the CST, either upon request or based on its findings.

171. It would work, under CST guidance, in maintaining up-to-date inventories, databases and scientific networks dealing with the issues of land degradation and desertification, and it would strengthen work with research units of other sister conventions in order to promote synergies in the design of joint strategies based on linkages between the different issues, such as climate change and biodiversity.

172. It would liaise between the scientific community and the CST in preparing future scientific conferences and would interact with the Division of Resource Mobilization to secure funding for CST activities.

173. The research and technical work performed by this Division would feed into the work of the CST and the CRIC, with a smooth mutual interaction. It would further assume the functions of early warning on the most salient issues for the Convention.

The Division of Resource Mobilization

174. The Division of Resource Mobilization would assume the core mandate of the GM as defined by the Convention, in identifying, mobilizing and channelling resources to assist affected eligible Parties. It would accumulate other functions related to the functioning of the Convention, its secretariat and subsidiary bodies, so as to secure a predictable fund-raising strategy to support an effective, integrated and financially predictable work programme.

175. With a single mechanism for resource mobilization being part of the secretariat, several problems identified during the assessment would disappear, in particular the confusion in identifying the relevant interlocutor for funding technical assistance requests. It would contribute to the strengthening of the fund-raising strategy and to the improvement of the COP budgetary process through the presentation of a consolidated proposal that would eliminate the perception of competition between two antagonistic bodies, thus resolving the problem of duality.

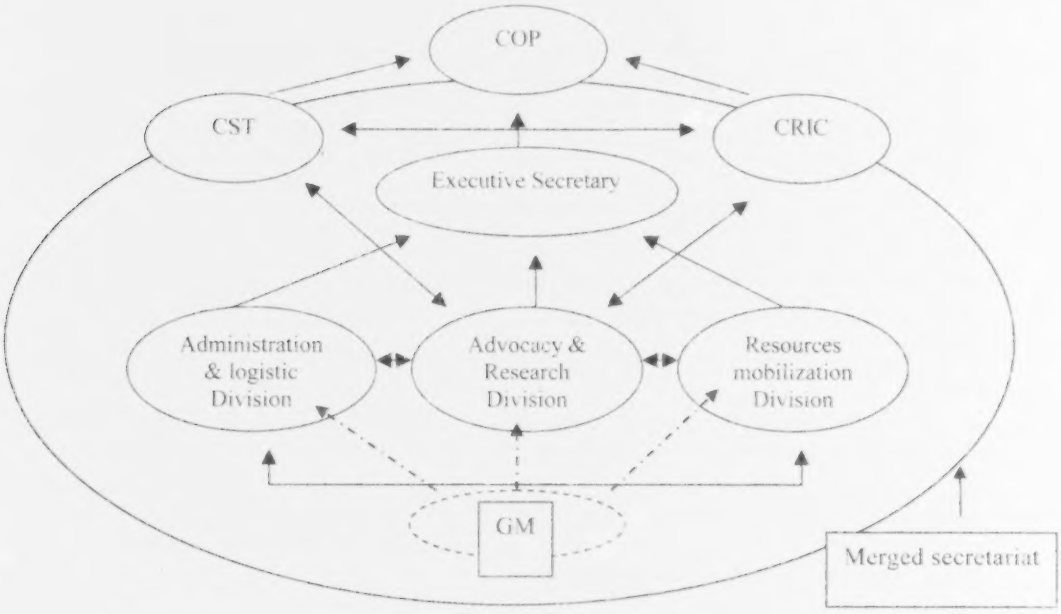
Division of Administration and Logistics

176. The Division of Administration and Logistics would cover the needs of the administration of the Convention, including conference management and planning as well as logistical support, according to the usual United Nations standards.

177. As such it would ensure a reliable segregation of duties in a core area of the secretariat mandate and contribute to enhanced and improved service delivery to Parties.

178. The three divisions would report to the COP through the Executive Secretary, with a single accountability and reporting line, thus resolving the core problem identified during the assessment: A double heading for one single Convention. The resulting structure would be as shown in the figure below:

Merging of the UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism (scenario 2)



179. In practice, the institutional merging can be implemented in different modalities, including or not the relocation of the GM. The modalities of the institutional reform go beyond the scope of the present assessment, as the JIU does not enter into recommendations at a micromanagement level when assessing the performance of an organization. Institutional coherence is the goal to be achieved, to strengthen the performance of the Convention, by ensuring the effective coordination of its institutions and subsidiary bodies.

180. Whether the merging takes place at the purely organizational level or includes relocation, the final result would, in the view of the Inspectors, lead to increased internal coherence in the definition and delivery of service to Parties through a unified secretariat.

181. The expected final result of the merging process should lead to increased internal coherence in the definition and integrated delivery of the services of the secretariat. It is important to note that the GM would not be simply transposed and be renamed as the Division of Resource Mobilization, but the staff of the secretariat and the GM would be reassigned to the different divisions according to their expertise and functions. The division would implement the functions currently assigned to the GM of which the mandated functions would be safeguarded and preserved in any merger.

182. Savings would be achieved due to the fact that in its current shape, only about a third of GM staff members specifically work on mobilizing resources. Further effectiveness would be secured by merging the two administrative machineries and procedures, which would report along a single line and be accountable directly to the COP, with no further intermediaries.

183. Under this scenario, the single Executive Secretary and the head of the Resource Mobilization Division should be chosen according to the current procedures for a maximum of two consecutive mandates of three years, but with a golden rule of regional rotation in both cases.

184. The Inspectors believe that the merging would address key problems identified during the assessment by introducing the following changes:

(a) Clarification of mandates and clear delimitation of competencies;

(b) One single head for the Convention;

(c) Clarification of reporting chain and accountability lines;

(d) Clear framework for cooperation and coordination;

(e) Institutional basis for an RBM-based unified work programme;

(f) Securing a coherent, long-term and predictable fund-raising strategy for the Convention;

(g) Avoiding functional duplication and overlapping and generating subsequent savings of resources;

(h) Strengthening of the scientific and policy advice bodies of the Convention and contributing to a better positioning of the Convention in the international arena.

185. All these elements would certainly address the greater problems at stake in the current setting of the Convention. However, it still remains to be debated whether the Convention would enjoy the same level of substantive and administrative benefits provided under the current institutional arrangements for the GM.

Scenario 3: the Global Mechanism to be converted into a desertification and land degradation fund

186. The issue of whether the GM is or is not a fund was at the very root of its creation, as a last-minute compromise reached after exhausting negotiations, at the core of which was precisely the issue of granting or not to the Convention access to a fund. Since access to a fund was denied, the GM came into existence.

187. Since then, the idea of a fund made available to support the needs of the Convention has not been completely abandoned, some Parties still being in support of it. The fact that the access to the GEF has not sufficiently addressed the needs of the Convention has also contributed to the support of this option. One should bear in mind that, without its own resources, the ability of the GM to sustain its broking role over the long term will be limited.

188. As agreed in The Strategy, the GEF has taken measures to improve its support to the Convention. It has been working in close collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat in order to improve collaboration and to facilitate further funding for issues at the core of the UNCCD mandate. The GEF has shortened the project cycle from 66 to 22 months and is in the process of further expediting procedures by promoting a programmatic approach and increasing the medium-size project funding limit from US$1 million to US$3 million. In response to COP requests, UNCCD is part of the technical working group for the GEF-5 replenishment, which will be aligned with The Strategy.

189. In spite of the evolving role of the GEF, some Parties consider that a desertification fund should be set up in close association with the ongoing process of establishing funding mechanisms under sister conventions. Collaboration in setting up a joint fund that would address synergies among sister conventions could represent an option that would be in line with the "delivering as one" approach.

190. The advantages of such a scenario would reside in the clarity of functioning and mandate of the GM, which would abide by the standard rules of a fund, disposing not only of seed funding but of a critical mass of resources to influence and spearhead medium- and long-term investment packages.

191. By becoming a fund, the GM would evolve from its broking role, as a financing mechanism, to that of a financial mechanism, with the capacity to receive and allocate funds in support of Convention needs. Whether the GM should become a fund or not, would however bring the debate back to its very early years, while there is no indication of changes in positions on this non-consensual matter.

192. At a time in which the donor community seeks rationalization of the aid and technical assistance architecture, creating a new fund on desertification might be difficult to defend, even more so in terms of duplication of existing funds, like the GEF. Further support from the GEF could be strengthened by enhanced cooperation, which has been lacking under the current GM management. Had collaboration been more positive and marked by mutual involvement and consultation, the respective performances would have probably returned better results for Parties.

Recommendation 6:

The COP is invited to consider the institutional arrangements described in scenarios 1 and 2 above and take a lasting solution on this issue during COP 9.

Annex

THE COMPARATIVE MANDATES OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND THE GLOBAL MECHANISM AS SET OUT IN THE CONVENTION

UNCCD secretariat *(article 23, para. 2)*	**Global Mechanism** *(article 21, paras. 4 and 5)*
(a) To make **arrangements for sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies** established under the Convention and to provide them with services as required;	A Global Mechanism to **promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology**, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties, is hereby established. This Global Mechanism shall function under the authority and guidance of the Conference of the Parties and be accountable to it.
(b) To compile and transmit reports submitted to it;	The Conference of the Parties shall identify, at its first ordinary session, an organization to house the Global Mechanism. The Conference of the Parties and the organization it has identified shall agree upon modalities for this Global Mechanism to ensure inter alia that such Mechanism:
(c) To **facilitate assistance to affected developing country Parties,** on request, particularly those in Africa, in the **compilation and communication of information** required under the Convention;	(a) identifies and draws up an **inventory of relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes that are available to implement the Convention**;
(d) To **coordinate** its activities with the secretariats of **other relevant international bodies and conventions**;	(b) provides **advice, on request, to Parties on innovative methods of financing** and sources of financial assistance and on improving the coordination of cooperation activities at the national level;
(e) To enter, under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, into such **administrative and contractual arrangements** as may be required for the effective discharge of it functions;	(c) **provides interested Parties** and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations **with information on available sources of funds** and on funding patterns in order to facilitate coordination among them; and
(f) **To prepare reports on the execution of its functions** under this Convention and present them to the Conference of the Parties;	(d) reports to the Conference of the Parties, beginning at its second ordinary session, on its activities.
(g) To perform such **other secretariat functions** as may be determined by the Conference of the Parties.	